



State of Wisconsin
Jim Doyle, Governor

Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
Rod Nilsestuen, Secretary

April 1, 2009

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress
2446 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-4902

Dear Representative Baldwin:

I am writing to request your support for an FY 10 appropriations request for equipment for a new DATCP food safety lab. The state Building Commission has approved construction of the lab, so we are not seeking federal funding for construction of the lab; we are seeking funding for lab equipment.

This project builds upon your efforts to enhance our nation's public health infrastructure and safeguard our food supply by sponsoring the Strengthening America's Public Health System Act. The Act recognizes the crucial role state and local authorities play in keeping our food supply safe: Over 80 percent of the food safety regulatory work done in this country is performed by employees of state or local government.

Our lab's primary function is the prevention of food-borne outbreaks through regular surveillance of everyday products. The work may be routine, but there is nothing routine about preventing the spread of salmonella in alfalfa sprouts, Listeria in sliced apples, and E. coli in bagged spinach and hamburger patties, as the lab has done.

I appreciate your consideration of this request. Please feel free to contact my office if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Sincerely,

Rod Nilsestuen
Secretary